

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN AGENCY PERSONNEL PRACTICES, DERIVED
PRIMARILY FROM PRE-EXIT INTERVIEWING:

Give a person a chance in at least two offices before deciding he does not merit salvaging. The duties and personalities of a particular office can be such as to cause a new employee to make a poor showing. A complete change of environment, based on the impressions acquired both by the new employee and by the Agency in the time since EOD, may be mutually beneficial. It does not make good sense to let an employee go out the back door without efforts at salvaging, while at the same time, we are bringing in the front door an employee about whom we know much less than we know about the one we are losing. 11

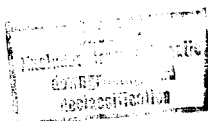
It is always disappointing to the pre-exit interviewer to feel that an employee is leaving primarily because he or she has never been given tasks or responsibilities commensurate with his or her obvious ability. A talented person is very likely to do poorly in a job which does not interest him. Admittedly, a certain amount of routine training is necessary for an employee, regardless of talent. On the other hand, additional responsibility may be the very spark needed to induce a gifted employee to fulfill his own potential.

A constantly recurring theme in pre-exit interviews is the fact that the losing office does not seem to work too hard to relocate people who are dissatisfied, particularly if they wish to leave a given component completely. The basic reason for this laxity appears to be the fear that if one employee is transferred, a whole flock will wish to follow. The undersigned, for reasons not completely clear to him, was a noble exception to this pattern. Following a mutually unsatisfactory period of a few months in OCR, he was turned over to personnel for shopping. He finally settled in a personnel job that, to him at least, has been ideal. He only regrets that other employees in unhappy situations are not always handled in such a superb fashion.

The rule that an employee must stay in RID for two years is a problem for employees who are temperamentally unsuited for the work. Admittedly, they sign a two-year agreement, though security restrictions dictate that they can be told little of what they are signing. Perhaps the rule is necessary in order to keep RID staffed.

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Nevertheless, the problem seems to merit some examination.

OCR and RID face somewhat similar problems. Occasionally the opinion is expressed by separating employees who have worked as analysts in OCR that the work does not require a college education. Perhaps at least some of the work done by analysts could be delegated to well-qualified clerks.

Conducting pre-exit interviews emphasizes the importance of scrupulous honesty on the part of recruiters. They should be careful not to say anything that can possibly be mis-interpreted. There is no question that "selective listening" is an affliction of many applicants; recruiters might counteract this by re-emphasizing information known to be open to mis-interpretation. The following points are typical of comments made in pre-exit interviews, particularly by girls: "Overseas assignment did not come in six months, as my recruiter promised"; or: "As a college graduate, I was told the Agency needed only clerk-typists. I was in the pool about two days when I met girls from other colleges who had been hired as professionals." Such a disillusionment sometimes leaves a scar that never completely disappears, even if the person finds work with the Agency very satisfying.

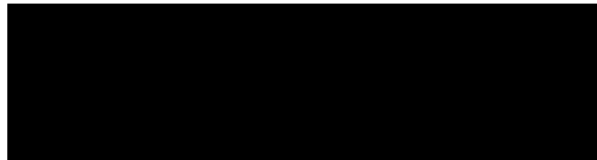
Clerk-stenographer candidates are told they must be able to take eighty words per minute to pass. Often they comment after taking the test that the advanced vocabulary makes the speed more like 120 words per minute. Perhaps the Agency should re-evaluate the test, or frankly tell applicants of the difficulty of the test.

A suggestion that occasionally arises is that there should be a person to whom an employee can go to discuss an unpleasant office situation without his office knowing about the conversation. This suggestion comes from employees still with the Agency probably more than from people who are leaving. 11

Unless a person has occupied such a position, it is difficult to remember that some jobs in the Agency are almost unbearably monotonous and offer little challenge to the mind. A little less compartmentalization would help; if that is impossible, at least some effort should be made to boost the morale of employees in these positions. Often these people have no knowledge whatever of the overall operation of the Agency. The security reindoctrination program which began in the auditorium 1 April 1964 might be a partial

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answer to this problem. Much of the information had appeared in the newspapers or on TV, but a few "inside" facts added to such a presentation tend to give employees a sense of "belonging." Programs of this sort, conducted perhaps every six months by various components of the Agency, could do much toward improving employee attitudes.



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